

# Friends of the Library Annual General Meeting 2025

## President's Report

2024 was a busy year for the Friends of the Library.

In 2024 the Friends committee engaged two university students as interns to assist with event planning. We had one student in Semester 1 and another in Semester 2. These students completed internships as an assessable part of their university studies. They were extremely helpful in helping the committee to present our major fundraiser for the year which was the May "GLAM" Event.

The Friends of the Library were fortunate to receive funding from the Annual Alumni Network Funding Scheme for our special fundraising event. The GLAM event was a celebration of the University Library to showcase its multiple functions as a Library, Gallery, Archive and Museum and the value of the GLAM sector in the community, not only economically, but also socially and culturally. The event focussed on career readiness for students and was also a networking event for alumni members keen to find out more about GLAM industries, and / or interact with potential peers and leaders in GLAM. This was our major fundraiser for the year and we were pleased to attract almost 100 attendees. Significant leaders within the GLAM industry spoke at the event which took place in the beautiful Elder Hall.

Our other events were wide ranging. Highlights included a very successful collaboration with the Friends of the State Library of South Australia. This event, entitled "Robert Barr Smith: A life of Power, Passion and Philanthropy" was part of the SA History Festival. Cheryl Hoskin presented a fascinating overview of the life of Adelaide's Robert Barr Smith, followed by the short film screening of the award-winning documentary *The Magic of Auchendarroch*. We were delighted that Michelle Wallis, the current owner and restorer of the house, was able to join us, as well as our patron Christopher Legoe KC AC, a great grandson of Robert Barr Smith. The Friends received a Vice Chancellor's Certificate of Recognition for outstanding volunteer service in relation to this event. I was very pleased to accept this award on behalf of the committee at the Volunteer Awards ceremony in December.

On 24 June we hosted a very well attended Lunchtime Discovery event with Bob and Annette Vincent from the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. In August, Lee Hayes and Professor Derek Abbott presented "A Woven Book of Hours: Early computer science applied to weaving a book in silk". This amazing book-artifact from the Barr Smith Library was fabricated from silk threads woven on a Jacquard Loom, a device patented by Joseph Marie Jacquard in 1804, which used punched cards to control the weaving operation.

In October 2024 our Discovery speaker was Ashley Dennis-Henderson, the 2023 winner of the Hugh Martin Weir Prize. This Prize honours the memory of Lieutenant Hugh Martin Weir (1915 to 2004), a Japanese prisoner of war 1942 and 1945, and the memory of his fellow prisoners of war. The prize is awarded for the purpose of encouraging study and research, including use of the Barr Smith Library collections, into any aspect of Australia's involvement in any war. Ms Dennis-Henderson gave a fascinating presentation on the possibilities of analysing large unstructured, text-based historical data sets using mathematical and computational techniques, and how the results can be combined with traditional methods.

The committee welcomed three new members: Richa Gulati (our new Secretary), Ankit Agarwal (the inaugural Vice President) and Sindy Millington (our new Treasurer). Special mention must be made here of the retirement of Paul Wilkins from the role of Secretary after many years of dedicated service. Paul is very much missed on the committee but we thank him wholeheartedly for his tireless dedication to the Friends of the Library, and his legacy of careful record keeping and relationship building with many stakeholders, both within the University and externally. We also thank Tony McArthur and Janet Fuss

who stepped down from the committee. Over the years they have played key roles on the FOTL committee and we wish them well.

Thanks are due to your 2024 Committee which met regularly throughout the year. Thanks also to University Librarian Sian Woolcock for her continuing support and to the Library Communications staff who help us to publicise events. Special thanks also to Sam Sturm and Linda Kinsella from the External Relations team for their support. Finally, a big thank you to our sponsors: Wakefield Press; The University of Adelaide Theatre Guild; and Coriole Vineyards for their generous and long-standing sponsorship.

**Dr Rachel Spencer**

**President**

**Friends of the Library**